

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) An image pickup apparatus comprising:
lens group drive means for driving a lens group to adjust focal point of said lens group;
image pickup means for generating a plurality of screens associated with a subject,
wherein the plurality of screens are adjacent temporally and in different [[in]] exposure
conditions, and said plurality of screens are synthesized to form a synthesized image;
means for detecting focal voltages from said plurality of screens and storing said detected
focal voltages, said focal voltages containing high-frequency components included in said
plurality of screens; and
focal voltage selecting means for selectively outputting one of said stored focal voltages
that is most suited to obtain a focus intended by the user on the basis of a predetermined
selection criterion;
wherein automatic focusing is carried out in accordance with said focal voltage outputted
from said focal voltage selecting means.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) An image pickup apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein
[[in]] during said automatic focusing, said focal voltage selecting means continuously provides a
focal voltage that is outputted at the time that said lens group is initially driven, [[in]] for a
period of time starting from said lens group are initially driven until a desired focus is reached,
to thereby stop moving said lens group.

4. (Original) An image pickup apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said focal voltage selecting means selectively outputs a focal voltage for focusing in accordance with magnitudes of said stored focal voltages inputted to said focal voltage selecting means.

5. (Currently Amended) An image pickup apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said focal voltage selecting means selectively outputs a focal voltage for focusing on the basis of a comparison among luminance level frequency distributions belonging to said screens respectively associated with said stored focal voltages inputted to said focal voltage selecting means.

6. (Currently amended) An image pickup apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said focal voltage selecting means varies said selection criterion in accordance with magnitudes of said stored focal voltages inputted to said focal voltage selecting means and luminance level frequency distributions belonging to said screens respectively associated with said stored focal voltages ~~inputted to said focal voltage selecting means~~.

Claims 7-15 (Cancelled)

16. (New) An image pickup apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the lens group drive means is responsive to an offset from a focal point obtained from the selected focal voltage to carry out said automatic focusing.